

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	No.
)	
2007 BMW 328i,)	
VIN: WBAVA33567KX83638,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

VERIFIED COMPLAINT OF FORFEITURE

COMES NOW, Plaintiff, United States of America, by and through its attorneys, Jeffrey B. Jensen, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Missouri, and Kyle T. Bateman, Assistant United States Attorneys, brings this verified complaint for forfeiture in a civil action *in rem* against the above listed defendant property, namely: a 2007 BMW 328i, VIN: WBAVA33567KX83638 (the “defendant vehicle”), and alleges as follows:

Nature of the Action

1. This *in rem* civil action arises from an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”) and the St. Charles County Regional Drug Task Force (“SCCRDTF”) that lead to the seizure of the defendant vehicle on or about May 25, 2017. As set forth below, the defendant vehicle was transporting \$75,920 in U.S. currency that was concealed in hidden compartments that were only accessible by triggering a sophisticated trap door mechanism. The driver of the vehicle admitted that she was using the defendant vehicle to transport currency to Arizona, and that she had been recruited to do so while at a club in Mexico. Additionally, the titled owner of the defendant vehicle admitted that she had been paid substantial amounts of cash to allow unknown individuals to use the defendant vehicle for unknown purposes. The defendant

vehicle is subject to forfeiture pursuant to Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(4) as a conveyance used and intended for use to transport, or in any manner to facilitate the transportation, sale, receipt, possession, or concealment of a controlled substance.

Jurisdiction and Venue

2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1345, 1355, and 1395.

3. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1355(b)(1)(A) because the acts and omissions giving rise to forfeiture took place in the Eastern District of Missouri. Venue is also proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1395(b) because the defendant property was seized in the Eastern District of Missouri.

Statutory Framework

4. Title 21, United States Code, Section 881(a)(4) authorizes the civil forfeiture of “all conveyances, including aircraft, vehicles, or vessels, which are used, or are intended for use, to transport, or in any manner to facilitate the transportation, sale, receipt, possession, or concealment of [a controlled substance].”

Facts Giving Rise to the Forfeiture

5. On or about May 25, 2017, SCCRDTF officers observed the defendant vehicle near Foristell, Missouri, within the Eastern District of Missouri, traveling west on Interstate Highway 70.

6. Officers conducted a traffic stop of the defendant vehicle for a traffic violation.

7. The driver and sole occupant of the defendant vehicle was Malesvi Amador-Sanchez (“Sanchez”), who is a Mexican national. Sanchez has crossed the Mexican border into the United States more than 100 times in the past three years. On one occasion when Sanchez was

attempting to cross the border into the United States, border agents discovered that the vehicle she was driving had hollowed out seats that appeared to be fashioned to transport contraband.

8. When officer's asked Sanchez for the vehicle registration, Sanchez provided a vehicle repair receipt dated January 11, 2017, that appeared to show a man's name as the owner of the defendant vehicle.

9. Officers noticed a strong odor of air freshener, with numerous fresheners visible, and noted that Sanchez appeared to be nervous.

10. Sanchez told officers that she had recently travelled from Mexico to North Carolina, and that she was on her way to Kansas City. Sanchez could not provide officers with any explanation regarding how she came to be in possession of the defendant vehicle.

11. A trained drug detection canine was deployed for a "free air sniff" of the defendant vehicle. The canine gave an affirmative response to the presence of a controlled substance.

12. During a subsequent search of the defendant vehicle, officers observed the odometer and noted that the defendant vehicle had logged approximately 30,000 miles in the approximate 4.5 months following the January 11, 2017, date on the vehicle repair receipt.

13. In addition, officers discovered that the defendant vehicle contained two secret compartments hidden between the back seats and the trunk wall that could be accessed by activating a sophisticated trap door mechanism. Inside the compartments was \$75,920 in U.S. currency in eight separate bundles, wrapped in green plastic, covered in grease and sealed in a vacuum bag (the "currency").

14. Sanchez told officers that she had been recruited at a club in Mexico to transport the currency to Tucson, Arizona, and had been promised \$3,000 upon completion.

15. Sanchez signed written disclaimers for both the currency and the defendant vehicle.

16. The currency was administratively forfeited by the DEA on or about December 5, 2017, when no claims were filed.

17. On or about June 6, 2017, approximately 12 days following the seizure of the defendant vehicle, the titled owner of the defendant vehicle (the “titled owner”), reported it stolen to authorities in North Carolina.

18. On or about June 8, 2017, a DEA agent attempted to contact the titled owner by telephone. The DEA agent spoke to a man who identified himself as the titled owner’s husband. The individual told the agent that the titled owner did not currently own the defendant vehicle. The individual did not mention that the titled owner had reported the defendant vehicle stolen two days prior.

19. On or about August 10, 2017, a DEA agent, with the assistance of a Winston-Salem, North Carolina police officer, engaged the titled owner in a conversation about the suspected fictitious reporting of the defendant vehicle as being stolen. During this conversation, the titled owner admitted that she had been paid a substantial amount of cash by unknown individuals to use the defendant vehicle for unknown purposes.

COUNT ONE – FORFEITURE
21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(4)

20. The United States incorporates by reference the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 to 21 above as if fully set forth herein.

21. The defendant vehicle is subject to forfeiture pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 881(a)(4) as a conveyance that was used or was intended for us to transport, or in any manner to facilitate the transportation, sale, receipt, possession, or concealment of a controlled substance.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the United States of America prays that a Warrant for Arrest be issued for the defendant vehicle and the defendant vehicle be condemned and forfeited to the United States of America, in accordance with the provisions of law; and that the United States of America be awarded its costs in this action, and have such other relief as provided by law and the nature of the case may require.

Respectfully submitted,

JEFFREY B. JENSEN
United States Attorney

/s/ Kyle T. Bateman
KYLE T. BATEMAN, #996646DC
Assistant United States Attorneys
111 South Tenth Street, 20th Floor
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

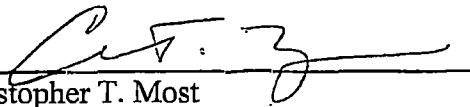
VERIFICATION

I, Special Agent Christopher T. Most, hereby verify and declare under penalty of perjury that I am a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration, that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint in rem and know the contents thereof, and that the matters contained in the Verified Complaint are true to my own knowledge, except that those matters herein stated to be alleged on information and belief and as to those matters I believe them to be true.

The sources of my knowledge and information and the grounds of my belief are the official files and records of the United States, information supplied to me by other law enforcement officers, as well as my investigation of this case, together with others, as a Special Agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on: 2/2/18
(date)



Christopher T. Most
Special Agent
Drug Enforcement Administration

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff _____
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorney's (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

DEFENDANTS

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant _____
(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant
☐ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- | | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Citizen of This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated <i>or</i> Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated <i>and</i> Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excl. Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Med. Malpractice <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 610 Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> 620 Other Food & Drug <input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 630 Liquor Laws <input type="checkbox"/> 640 R.R. & Truck <input type="checkbox"/> 650 Airline Regs. <input type="checkbox"/> 660 Occupational Safety/Health <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other LABOR <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Mgmt. Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 730 Labor/Mgmt. Reporting & Disclosure Act <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Empl. Ret. Inc. Security Act	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 810 Selective Service <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 875 Customer Challenge 12 USC 3410 <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 892 Economic Stabilization Act <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 894 Energy Allocation Act <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 900 Appeal of Fee Determination Under Equal Access to Justice <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	CIVIL RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 444 Welfare <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights PRISONER PETITIONS <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence Habeas Corpus: <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition			

V. ORIGIN

(Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 Original Proceeding ☐ 2 Removed from State Court ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened ☐ 5 Transferred from another district (specify) ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation ☐ 7 Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

Brief description of cause:

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

☐ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER F.R.C.P. 23

DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: ☐ Yes ☐ No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE

DOCKET NUMBER

DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

RECEIPT # AMOUNT APPLYING IFP JUDGE MAG. JUDGE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44**Authority For Civil Cover Sheet**

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

I. (a) Plaintiffs-Defendants. Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.

(b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)

(c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".

II. Jurisdiction. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.C.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here.

United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)

III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.

IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If the nature of suit cannot be determined, be sure the cause of action, in Section VI below, is sufficient to enable the deputy clerk or the statistical clerks in the Administrative Office to determine the nature of suit. If the cause fits more than one nature of suit, select the most definitive.

V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407. When this box is checked, do not check (5) above.

Appeal to District Judge from Magistrate Judgment. (7) Check this box for an appeal from a magistrate judge's decision.

VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. **Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity.** Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553

Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service

VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P.

Demand. In this space enter the dollar amount (in thousands of dollars) being demanded or indicate other demand such as a preliminary injunction.

Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.

VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

_____,)
 plaintiff,)
 _____,)
 v. _____) Case No. _____
 _____,)
 defendant.)

ORIGINAL FILING FORM


THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND VERIFIED BY THE FILING PARTY WHEN INITIATING A NEW CASE.

THIS CAUSE, OR A SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT COMPLAINT, WAS
PREVIOUSLY FILED IN THIS COURT AS CASE NUMBER _____
AND ASSIGNED TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE _____.

NEITHER THIS CAUSE, NOR A SUBSTANTIALLY EQUIVALENT COMPLAINT,
PREVIOUSLY HAS BEEN FILED IN THIS COURT, AND THEREFORE MAY BE
OPENED AS AN ORIGINAL PROCEEDING.

The undersigned affirms that the information provided above is true and correct.

Date: 

 _____
Signature of Filing Party

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	No.
)	
2007 BMW 328i,)	
VIN: WBAVA33567KX83638,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

WARRANT FOR ARREST OF PROPERTY

TO: THE UNITED STATES MARSHAL AND/OR ANY OTHER DULY AUTHORIZED
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

Whereas, on February 2, 2018, the United States of America filed a Verified Complaint for Civil Forfeiture in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, against the above-named defendant property, alleging that said property is subject to seizure and civil forfeiture to the United States for the reasons mentioned in the complaint; and

WHEREAS, the defendant property is currently in the possession, custody, or control of the United States; and

WHEREAS, in these circumstances, Supplemental Rule G(3)(b)(i) directs the Clerk of the Court to issue an arrest warrant in rem for the arrest of the defendant property; and

WHEREAS, Supplemental Rule G(3)(c) provides that the warrant of arrest in rem must be delivered to a person or organization authorized to execute it;

NOW THEREFORE, you are hereby commanded to arrest the above-named defendant property by serving a copy of this warrant on the custodian in whose possession, custody, or

control the property is presently found, and to use whatever means may be appropriate to protect and maintain it in your custody until further order of this Court,

YOU ARE FURTHER COMMANDED, promptly after execution of this process, to file the same in this Court with your return thereon, identifying the individuals upon whom copies were served and the manner employed.

GREGORY J. LINHARES, CLERK
United States District Court

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Date: _____